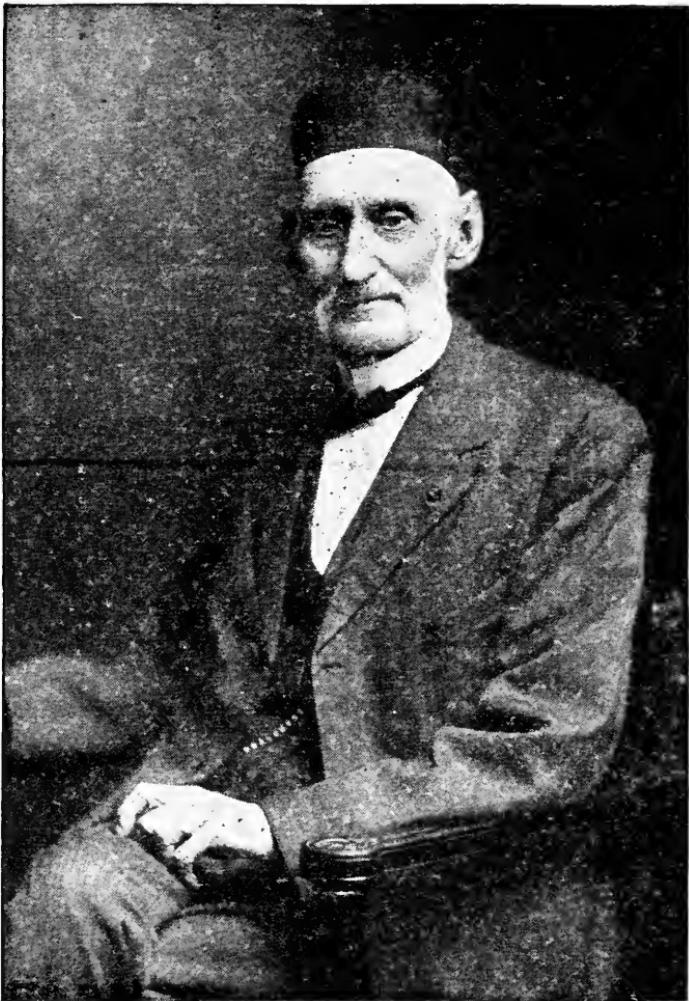


A
*Curious Way of Getting Rid
of A Cowardly Captain.*

French Girls

By SAMUEL HARRIS
Late 1st. Lieutenant Co. A 5th Mich. Cavalry

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SAMUEL HARRIS

Late First Lieutenant Company A. 5th Michigan Cavalry

Born September 15th, 1836

A CURIOUS WAY OF GETTING RID OF A COWARDLY CAPTAIN.

The Fifth Michigan Cavalry was camped near Stevensburg, Va., as we had about ten miles of the Rapidan River to guard. One morning, Lieutenant Colonel Gould's orderly came to my tent and told me that Col. Gould wanted to see me. I went up to his tent, and he told me he was going to send Captain _____ with his company down to Jacob's Ford and ordered me to take twenty-five of my men and go down with him. I protested all I could, but no use. I took a trusted Sergeant with me, as I had to leave the Orderly Sergeant in charge of the rest of the company and ordered him to be sure to take Corporal _____ and his squad.

We arrived at the Ford in a big rain storm. On our side of the Ford was high and dry ground, but the captain said that he would not camp there, for we would be in plain sight of the Rebs and they would come across and gobble us all up before we could get out of the way. He

went about one mile north and ran into the middle of a large swamp. I rode up to him and protested that it was inhuman to make the men and the horses stand in six inches of water and mud. His answer was that the rebs could not get at us before we could get out of their way in this swamp.

I was about sick with the cold and wet. My men had placed two sacks of oats end to end and put a shelter tent over them, and I had just crawled in and covered up with my blankets, when the captain came to me and ordered me to detail a corporal and six of my men as a guard at headquarters.

You may well bet that I was mad from head to foot and I ripped out some pretty hard things about having guards at his tent when there were so many on the river and one at each end of the camp in the road. But no use—he was bound to have one at his tent. I sent for a corporal, who could think of more deviltry in a minute than I could think of in a day. He started out to do some tall swearing, but I stopped him, telling him that I had done some strong talking and all he had to do was to obey orders. He took his squad and went to the captain's tent, and in about a half hour he came to me and said that the captain had taken off his boots and put them where he could reach

them and he was going to take them to two men of our company who had bad cases of Virginia Colic.

In about a half hour a gun was fired off about ten rods north of the camp and I knew some deviltry was going on as there was only one gun fired. Almost immediately the captain hollered out at the top of his voice,

"Turn out the guard, the Rebs are coming!" at the same time reaching for his boots, and in pulling them on he got well spattered with the colic and smelt like ten polecats. In a short time he came to where I lay and hollered out:

"Do you see what your men have done to me?" I believe you put them up to it and when we get back to camp I shall prefer charges against you. I answered:

"Captain, you had better keep as still about this as you can for if the officers and men get wind of this they will laugh you out of camp."

When we got back to camp, I heard nothing of charges against me, or the corporal, but the captain could not help seeing that every time several of the men got together they were laughing very hard about something.

In a short time he resigned and went where Rebel shells and bullets did not ZIP by.

OUR BOYS OVER IN FRANCE MARRYING FRENCH GIRLS.

I don't blame them. In many cases our boys were badly wounded and would not have lived had not many of these French girls gone into the hospitals, many times under a heavy shell-fire from the German guns. These girls stood by our boys through thick and thin until they were returned to health; our boys would have been unworthy the name of American and if under such circumstances he did not fall in love with her and marry her he would be a bigger brute than I hope any man wearing the uniform of an American soldier would be.

I can sympathize with these boys and girls from actual experience. I was very badly wounded the 2nd day of March, 1864. I was taken to Army Headquarters in Richmond about noon on Friday the 4th. James A. Sedden, the Rebel Secretary of War, ordered a drunk-head court martial on me immediately, which sentenced me to be hung that afternoon. Mrs. Jefferson Davis saved me that day. James A. Sudden, the Secretary of War, declared he would have me hung on Sunday and sent for his wife, daughter, about 19, and son, about 16, to identify me as the officer who ordered the men into their house to break up their furniture.

They came into Libby Prison Hospital just as the Reb surgeon and a Yank prisoner had finished soaking off my clothing to get at my wound for the first time. I was in a perfect state of collapse. Mrs. Sedden came right up to me and doubled up her fist and struck me several times in the face and called me every bad name she could think of. Her daughter actually cried to see her mother act so and begged of her not to abuse me as "he is a wounded officer." Then Miss Sedden, pointing her finger at me, said "That is not the officer that ordered the men into our house to smash our furniture, but he is the officer that came up on our front porch with a big revolver in his hand and pointing at three or four men told them to get out of there or he would shoot them and they all got out very quick." She said, "I shall tell Father and President Davis what this officer did for us." This was the same as to tell me "Young man, I shall do everything in my power to save you from being hung tomorrow."

Then they all walked out with the Reb officer that came in with them. It was a long afternoon and night to me; I thought, "Could that frail girl stem the tide against her father, the Secretary of War, and others who were after my life?"

The next morning (Sunday) about ten o'clock, the Surgeon had just finished dressing my wound and gone three or four cots from me when a Sergeant and four men marched in and came direct to my cot; I thought they had come to take me out to hang me. In an instant the Reb Surgeon was at my side and asked the Sergeant, "What are you doing in here?" He answered, "I have orders from Major Turner to take Lieut. Harris down in one of the dungeons." The Surgeon told him to get out, that he was in command there and to tell Major Turner to go to Hell. In an instant it flashed upon my mind that Miss Sedden had saved me from being hung. Don't you think that I fell in love with her? I thought she was an angel sent down from Heaven to save me, and she did.

I was in Reb prisons over nine months. When I got out, soon after the war was over, I went to Richmond, mostly to find Miss Sedden to thank her for her kindness to me and to help her as I felt the war had wiped out all their ready money, but found she had died six months before. I hope to meet her in Heaven where I can thank her.

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